DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 307 223 SO 020 120

AUTHOR Nelson, Lynn R.; And Others
TITLE The E-3 Project: A Collaborative Curriculum Development Effort.
PUB DATE 21 Feb 89
NOTE 11p.; Paper presented at the Association of Teacher Educators Conference (St. Louis, MO, February 18-22, 1989).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Curriculum Development; Economic Opportunities; *Economics; *Economics Education; *Educational Change; *Entrepreneurship; *Experiential Learning; High Schools; High School Students; Internship Programs; Program Descriptions; Social Studies; Student Experience
IDENTIFIERS *Entrepreneurship Economic Education Program

ABSTRACT

This paper chronicles the effort of a curriculum development team to alter the high school social studies curriculum, its content, and instructional methods. Specifically, Entrepreneur/Economic Education (E-3) is the focus of this curriculum reform effort. The E-3 program is designed as a four-year cooperative effort involving selected teachers, administrators, and students in the School District of Philadelphia, the Center for Private Enterprise at Baylor University, Widener University's Center for Economic Education, and the Pew Charitable Trusts. Teacher education courses allow collaboration between teachers and the curriculum development team. E-3 is designed to have a major impact on the lives of students chosen to participate in the program. It also reaches non-participants by infusing special units into the ninth and tenth grade social studies curriculum. Selected students enroll in an 11th-grade entrepreneurship elective course comprised of economic concepts, principles, and analysis of private and public entrepreneurial activities. Summer internships give students the opportunity to work with individuals engaged in entrepreneurial activities. The 12th-grade course combines macroeconomic understanding with the development of a plan to start a venture of their own. Student development and presentation of a business plan requires application of knowledge gained from their courses and internships, and provides practical experience in planning for a venture. The program is based on the principle that curriculum change and implementation in classrooms is best accomplished through the collaborative efforts of those affected by change. Attempts are being made to establish E-3 in school districts throughout the nation. (GEA)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED307223.

THE E-3 PROJECT: A COLLABORATIVE CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT EFFORT

A Paper Presented at the
Association of Teacher Educators
Conference

St. Louis, Missouri
February 21, 1989

Lynn R. Nelson
Robert J. Wright
William Dougherty

SO020120

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

LYNN R. NELSON

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

THE E-3 PROJECT: A COLLABORATIVE CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT EFFORT

Each generation of Americans, responding to the perceived crises in their lives, appears to rediscover the idea that educational reforms are necessary in order to enable youth to successfully cope with the changes which will occur during their lives. Although reformers often call for quantitative changes in school practices -- longer school days, a longer school year, smaller class sizes -- and somewhat less frequently advocate qualitative changes such as innovative teaching techniques, descriptions of school practices paint a timeless picture of the high school classrooms. This picture could have been painted in 1890 or 1988. Teachers lecture and students take notes and sometimes respond to their teachers questions with short answers that require recall and perhaps some elaboration. In the face of major reform efforts, such as the "New Social Studies" of the late 1960s and 1970s, social studies teachers have clung tenaciously to their traditional methods of instruction.

This paper chronicles the efforts of a curriculum development team to alter the high school social studies curriculum, its content and instructional methods. Specifically, Entrepreneurship/Economic Education is the focus of this curriculum reform effort. Entrepreneurship requires both knowledge and attitudes. While the knowledge base drawn

from economics and business is included in the secondary curriculum, the attitudes of initiative and self-confidence are often either neglected or, at best, are secondary or tertiary concerns compared with other curricular purposes.

Entrepreneurship/Economic Education (E^3)

The E^3 project began in the spring of 1987 as the result of the efforts of Dr. Ezra Staples, Widener University, and several staff members of the Pew Charitable Trusts in Philadelphia. Entrepreneurship was viewed by these individuals as a necessary, but neglected, area in the secondary curriculum. The project proposal describes the two major benefits derived from the study of entrepreneurship. There are the benefits to individuals who understand the American economic system and possess confidence, as well as knowledge. The second benefit accrues to society as the result of increased entrepreneurial activity.

The following social benefits are included in the April, 1987, proposal submitted to the Pew Charitable Trusts:

> Entrepreneurs create a disproportionately large number of new jobs in the American economy.
>
> Entrepreneurs create new technologies. New technologies help America remain competitive in the world economy.
>
> Entrepreneurs provide a more stable economic base for local economies than do a few large employers
>
> Entrepreneurship provides opportunities for minorities and women who have suffered from discrimination.

As the purposes of the E^3 program crystalized, the scope of the curriculum reform effort became evident. The aims of individual gain and social benefit require curricular materials and teaching strategies which enable students to gain skills and self-confidence, as well as economic understanding. The "New Social Studies" projects of the 1960s were conceived upon optimistic premise that qualitative changes in teaching practices -- inquiry learning, case studies, and the learning of social science concepts -- would be embraced by teachers when they understood the merit of these changes. To the chagrin of the academics who wrote these materials, most teachers did not embrace materials and methods which ran counter to the conventional wisdom concerning good teaching practice. One of the clearest messages from failed curriculum reform programs is that research, development, diffusion, and adoption models for curriculum revision may be successful in the first three stages and fail miserably when teachers decline to adopt, disadopt, or change the program to fit their traditional purposes. Quite clearly, the task facing the advocates of Entrepreneurship/Economics Education in the spring of 1987 was to design a program in cooperation with high school teachers who are the key personnel in achieving the program's purposes.

Entrepreneurship/Economics Curriculum

The Entrepreneurship/Economic Education program is designed as a four-year cooperative effort involving

selected teachers, administrators, and students in the School District of Philadelphia, the Center for Private Enterprise at Baylor University, Widener University's Center for Economic Education, the Joint Council on Economic Education, and the Pew Charitable Trusts.

Dr. Calvin Kent, Baylor University, has long been associated with the study and teaching of entrepreneurship. His responsibility is to coordinate a team of economic educators who are charged with the task of writing activities for the program.

Dr. Lynn Nelson, Director of the Center for Economic Education, Widener University, is responsible for the teacher education component of the program. Social Studies and business educators in pilot schools are offered the opportunity to participate in two graduate courses and a summer internship for graduate credit. The initial course introduces to the discipline teachers who have little, or no, background in economics. This course emphasizes the microeconomic concepts that form the foundation of entrepreneurial activities. The second course focuses on successful entrepreneurs; their characteristics, accomplishments, and role in the American economic system.

The teacher education courses provide the opportunity for collaboration between teachers and the curriculum development team. Materials under development are used as

instructional materials in the courses. Teachers are given the opportunity to use materials in their classes. This includes the modification of materials to suit the teachers' purposes. Teachers are required to create economic/entrepreneurship activities to be used in their classrooms.

The summer program for teachers is designed so that participants intern in two separate businesses. The program begins with a seminar that focuses on the purposes of the internship. This is followed by the first internship of three weeks duration and a debriefing seminar during which the teachers describe their experiences and link these internship experiences with economic and entrepreneurship principles. The final three week internship is followed by a seminar. Teacher interns keep logs of their experiences and write activities for their classrooms based on these experiences.

Curricular Changes for High School Students and Teachers

E^3 is designed to have a major impact on the lives of students who are chosen to participate in this program. However, an additional purpose of the program is to affect the teachers and students who do not participate in the entrepreneurship courses at the eleventh and twelfth grade levels. In order to achieve this goal, the curriculum is

designed to include units which are infused into the social studies curriculum in ninth and tenth grades as well as entrepreneurship courses taught to a select group of students.

Students are selected for the program through the process of application and review by the teachers at participating schools in Philadelphia. The criteria for selection include the student's attendance record, enthusiasm for the program, and, to a lesser degree, their academic record.

Students selected for the program enroll in an eleventh grade entrepreneurship elective. The content of this course is comprised of economic concepts, principles, and analysis of entrepreneurial activities in the private and public sectors of the economy. This course is taught by an experienced high school teacher of economics. Not only does this teacher use materials developed by the curriculum development team, but his recommendations and revisions regarding the materials are determining factors in the curriculum design process.

Summer internships of six weeks duration were initiated in July and August, 1988. Each student was assigned to two individuals who are engaged in entrepreneurial activities. Attention was given to obtain mentors who would serve as role models for the interns. Mentors representing the public, as well as the private, sector of the economy were

solicited to provide internship experiences for the students. Three seminars were included in the summer program. These seminars were designed to outline the program for students and mentors, compare internship experiences, and debrief students. Debriefing focuses on connecting the economic principles which students learned in the preceeding school year with the experiences that students received in working with their mentors.

Supervision for the internship program was the responsibility of several classroom teachers who participated in the program. Throughout the 1987-1988 school year regular meetings were held involving the Social Studies Supervisor for School District of Philadelphia, the Department Chair for Social Studies, and lead teachers for the project. These meetings were held to promote communication regarding the project. As a result of these meetings, teachers were identified who possessed the interest and skills to function as internship supervisors.

The twelfth grade, "Capstone", course in entrepreneurship combines macroeconomic understanding with the development of a plan to start a venture of their own. While the previous course emphasized microeconomics, price theory, the senior course frames entrepreneurial activity within the American economy; unemployment, inflation, business cycles and international trade are topics included within this course.

Students, either alone or as a member of a team are to develop and present a business plan. The purpose of this activity is twofold: (1) it provides students with the opportunity to apply the knowledge gained from courses and internships; (2) and it provides the practical experience of planning for a venture, a process that is necessary for any successful business.

Community Involvement

A Local Advisory Board was organized in October, 1987, under the chairmanship of Mr. Clarence Farmer. Members of the Board were drawn from education as well as public and private enterprises. The members of the Board are very active in the recruitment of mentors for the summer program and the establishment of policy guidelines. The Board meets on a quarterly basis and Board members are invited to participate in all student and teacher activites. A high percentage of Board members have actively participated in the program as mentors and as speakers in the teacher education program.

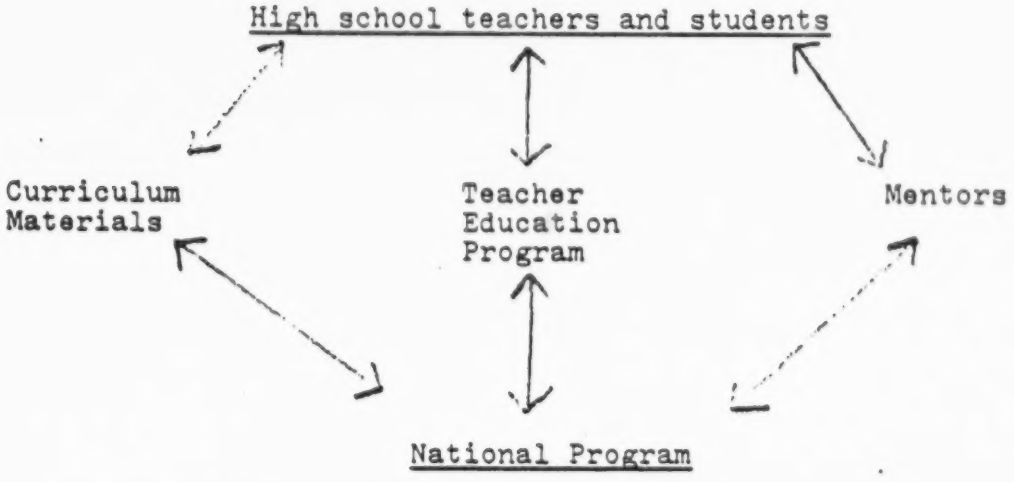
National Linkages

The Joint Council on Economic Education, a national organization with Centers for Economic Education on college campuses throughout the United States, serves as the coordinator of the program. The Joint Council's primary responsibilities are to garner additional financial resources to complement the initial funding provided by the Pew Charitable Trusts, and to establish the E^3 program in additional school districts throughout the nation.

Conclusion

Entrepreneurship/Economic Education Program is based on the principle that curriculum change and implementation of that change in classrooms is best accomplished through the collaborative efforts of individuals who are affected by those changes. Diagram I represents the relationships between individuals and organizations involved in the E^3 project. It is written from the perspective of classroom teachers who are responsible for implementing and maintaining the program.

Diagram I



This program is shaped through the efforts of teachers, students and mentors. In turn, this program will be adapted to local needs by participants in various cities.

It is too early to predict the degree to which the content and teaching strategies developed in the E^3 project will become part of the curriculum in the pilot school. At this time enthusiasm runs high. We believe this enthusiasm is at least partly a result of the collaboration between teachers, university faculty, and members of the business community.